



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Vicksburg District
4155 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435



Public Notice

APPLICATION NO.:	ASJ-200311550
EVALUATOR:	Ms. A. Susan Jarvis
PHONE NO.:	(601) 631-5146
FAX NO.:	(601) 631-5459
E-MAIL:	regulatory@mvk02.usace.army.mil
DATE:	March 31, 2004
EXPIRATION DATE:	April 21, 2004

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District, and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services, are considering an application for a Department of the Army permit and State water quality certification for the work described herein. A water quality certification is required in accordance with statutory authority contained in the LRS 30:2074 A(3) and provisions of the Clean Water Act. Comments should be forwarded to the Vicksburg District, ATTN: CEMVK-OD-F, at the above address, and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services, Post Office Box 4313, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-4313.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has a copy of the application on file in their office in Baton Rouge, and may be inspected at any time between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Copies may be obtained from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality upon payment of cost of printing. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality will make a final decision on the water quality certification pertaining to this application within 30 days after expiration of this notice.

Law Requiring a Permit: Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403), which applies to structures or work in navigable waters of the United States and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344), which applies to discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

Name of Applicant:

Louisiana Department of Transportation
and Development
Post Office Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Location of Work: Sections 5, 8, 9, 16, 17, 21, 22, 27, and 34 of T9N-R9E and sections 31 and 32 of T10N-R9E, latitude 31° 43' 29", longitude 91° 32' 40", within the Tensas River drainage basin, Concordia and Catahoula Parishes, Louisiana.

Description of Work: (See enclosed map and drawings.)

The following descriptions of the proposed project and associated impacts are based upon information provided by the applicant.

The applicant is applying for a Department of the Army permit to mechanically clear and fill 6.85 acres of wetlands and 2.19 acres of other waters of the United States, associated with the construction and maintenance of the widening and overlay of Louisiana Highway 15.

The project would begin on Louisiana Highway 15 south of Clayton, Louisiana, and extend in a north-northwesterly direction through Clayton, across the Tensas River on a new alignment, ending near the community of Greenville, Louisiana. The existing highway would remain in place for northbound traffic, and two new lanes of asphaltic concrete roadway would be constructed to the west of the existing highway for southbound traffic. The two new lanes of roadway would be separated from the existing roadway by a 60-foot-wide depressed median, except through the town of Clayton, where a couplet would be constructed. The new lanes through Clayton generally follow an abandoned railroad and would require the construction of a new bridge across the Tensas River. The new bridge, approximately 600 feet in length, would be constructed at the former railroad bridge crossing site. Roadbed dimensions for the new two-lane highway would average 40 feet top width and 90 feet bottom width. The average cleared right-of-way would be 230 feet to a maximum of approximately 490 feet for the realignment of Sharp Road along the Tensas River bank. This project would require approximately 152,500 cubic yards of general excavation and 167,500 cubic yards of embankment. The project would be approximately 6.4 miles in length.

The purpose of the work is to widen and upgrade the existing Louisiana Highway 15 roadway, to provide a four-lane link from southwest Mississippi in the Natchez area to northeast Louisiana, to improve accessibility along the Louisiana Highway 15 corridor by increasing the safety and level of service of the highway.

The proposed project calls for the existing Louisiana Highway 15 from south of Clayton in Concordia Parish to near the community of Greenville in Catahoula Parish, to be four-laned and upgraded to meet current transportation standards. This proposed project is the result of legislation created in 1989, known as the Transportation Infrastructure Model for

Economic Development (TIMED), which designated certain highways and transportation facilities for improvement. One objective of the TIMED program is to ensure that a four-laned highway connects most major urban areas of the state. The four-laning of the Louisiana Highway 15 is an important element in linking southwest Mississippi to northeast Louisiana.

A total of 15 sites were delineated, and eight sites were identified as wetlands that would be impacted by the project. Sites 01 and 02 covered an area located in the vicinity of Station No. (STA.) 103+50 to 106+00, and would impact approximately 0.15 acre of wetlands. Site 03 was located in the vicinity of STA. 107+00 to 121+00, and would impact approximately 0.67 acre of wetlands. Sites 9 and 10 covered an area located in the vicinity of STA. 144+00 to 162+75, and would impact approximately 1.33 acres of wetlands. Sites 11 and 12 covered an area in the vicinity of STA. 164+00 to 179+50, and would impact approximately 4.05 acres of wetlands. Sites 13 and 14 covered an area located in the vicinity of STA. 277+75 to 314+75, and would impact approximately 0.85 acre of wetlands.

The dominant species of vegetation at the eight delineated wetland sites include: *Acer rubrum*, *Acer negundo*, *Albizia julibrissin*, *Alternanthera philoxeroides*, *Ambrosia* sp., *Ampelopsis arborea*, *Artemisia* sp., *Arundinaria gigantea*, *Carya aquatica*, *Carex vulpinoidea*, *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Celtis laevigata*, *Coreopsis* sp., *Cornus florida*, *Cyperus pseudovegetus*, *Digitaria* sp., *Eleocharis* sp., *Elymus virginicus*, *Gleditsia triacanthos*, *Hibiscus moscheutos*, *Ilex deciduas*, *Juncus effusus*, *Leersia* sp., *Ligustrum sinense*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Paraenoncissus quinquefolia*, *Paspalum urvillei*, *Platanus occidentalis*, *Polygonum amphibium*, *Pueraria montanum*, *Quercus nigra*, *Rhus copallinum*, *Rhynchospora corniculata*, *Rubus trivialis*, *Rumex crispus*, *Salix nigra*, *Sambucus canadensis*, *Saururus cernuus*, *Smilax* sp., *Solidago* sp., *Sorghum halepense*, *Taxodium distichum*, *Toxicodendron radicans*, *Trifolium repens*, *Ulmus americana*, *Verbena bracteata*, *Verbena brasiliensis* and *Vitis rotundifolia*.

A total of approximately 6.85 acres of jurisdictional wetlands would be impacted by the construction of the captioned project, including the cleared right-of-way. The applicant proposes to begin mitigation for the wetlands being impacted by the construction activities for this project by minimizing impacts in accordance with their standard specifications. Unavoidably lost wetland functions and values will be appropriately mitigated.

A total of 2.19 acres of other waters of the United States would be impacted by the construction of the captioned project, including the cleared right-of-way. Three of the 15 delineated

sites were identified as other waters of the United States. The locations and amounts of impacts for these sites are shown in the Wetland Delineation Site Summary Table. The proposed bridge over the Tensas River, located in the vicinity of STA.144+00 to 149+50, would be a concrete girder bridge and would be constructed at the former railroad bridge crossing in Clayton, Louisiana. Impacts to the wetlands associated with the bridge construction would include approach and revetment work.

The placement of dredged and/or fill material in waters of the United States associated with the mechanized land clearing and levee construction requires a Department of the Army Permit.

Upon reviewing this notice, you should write to this office to provide your opinion of the impacts this work will have on the natural and human environment, and address any mitigation you believe is necessary to offset these impacts. Other comments are welcome, but the above information will further our review of the applicant's plan as proposed. Comments of a general nature are not as helpful as those specific to the impacts of the subject project.

State Water Quality Permit: The State Pollution Control Agency must certify that the described work will comply with the State's water quality standards and effluent limitations before a Corps permit is issued.

Cultural Resources: An initial review indicates that the proposed project would not affect any of the sites in Catahoula Parish listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Copies of this notice have been sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer, Federally Recognized Tribes, the Corps archaeologists, and other interested parties for comment on potential effects to cultural resources that could result from this activity.

Endangered Species: Our initial finding is that the proposed work would not affect any endangered species or their critical habitat. This proposal is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and any comments regarding endangered species or their critical habitat will be addressed in our evaluation of the described work.

Flood Plain: In accordance with 44 CFR Part 60 (Flood Plain Management and Use), participating communities are required to review all proposed development to determine if a flood plain development permit is required. Flood plain administrators should review the proposed development described in this public notice and apprise this office of any flood plain development permit requirements.

Evaluation Factors: The decision whether or not to issue a permit will be based upon an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits that may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its expected adverse effects. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered; among these are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, historic values, fish and wildlife values, flood damage prevention, land use classification, navigation, recreation, water supply, water quality, energy needs, safety, food requirements and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the proposed activity will include application of the guidelines published by the Environmental Protection Agency under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

Public Involvement: The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties. These comments will be used to evaluate the impacts of this project. All comments will be considered and used to help determine whether to issue the permit, deny the permit, or issue the permit with conditions, and to help us determine the amount and type of mitigation necessary. This information will be used in our Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing.

Opportunity for a Public Hearing: Any person may make a written request for a public hearing to consider this permit application. This request must be submitted by the public notice expiration date and must clearly state why a hearing is necessary. Failure of any agency or individual to comment on this notice will be interpreted to mean that there is no objection to the proposed work. Please bring this announcement to the attention of anyone you know who might be interested in this matter.

Notification of Final Permit Actions: Each month, the final permit actions from the preceding month are published on the Vicksburg District Regulatory web page. To access this information, you may follow the link from the Regulatory web page, <http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/offices/od/odf/main.asp>, or go directly to the Final Permit Actions web page at <http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil/offices/od/odf/PubNotice/MonthlyNotice/pnmain.asp>.

W. Harold Lee
Team Leader
Evaluation Section

WETLAND DELINEATION SITE SUMMARY TABLE
STATE PROJECT NO. 026-03-0025
Louisiana Highway 15, Clayton-Tullos
Concordia-Catahoula Parishes, Louisiana
SITES 01-15

Site	Station		Total Impacts (Acres)		Type
	Start	End	Wetlands	Other Waters	
01	103+50	104+50	0.06	--	RSD
02	105+00	106+00	0.09	--	RSD
03	107+00	121+00	0.67	--	Drain
04	138+50	140+70	--	--	NJ
05	106+00	108+00	--	--	NJ
06	106+00	135+00	--	--	NJ
07	139+40	141+30	--	--	NJ
08	142+70	142+70	--	--	NJ
09	144+00	149+50	0.20	1.52	Tensas River
10	154+50	162+75	1.13	--	RRD, Drains
11	165+00	171+00	1.29	--	H/Drain
12	164+00	179+00	2.76	0.1	H/Drain
13	277+75	279+50	0.76	--	SHB
14	313+50	314+75	0.09	0.37	LB
15	341+00	479+50	--	--	NJ
Totals			6.85	2.19	

Legend: RSD-Roadside Ditch, RRD-Railroad Ditch, H/Drain-Hardwood Drain,
SHB-School House Bayou, LB-Lee Bayou, NJ-Non-jurisdictional Site

CEMVK-OD-FE ASJ-200311550